

CHARACTER SKETCH OF LATE KING BY A GREAT BRITISH JOURNALIST

Mr. W. F. Sted Reviews Incidents in the Reign of Late Monarch—Was Central Equilibrium in Midst of Swaying Forces in Political Controversy.

The following character sketch of His Late Majesty is by Mr. W. F. Sted, a great man in his field.

I realized, as I had never done before, the enormous advantage of having a man of such great qualities embodied in a person who is carefully trained for that position from the moment of his birth. I realized that it is not possible to make intense political enemies of one-half of the nation. To have a man of such qualities in the midst of all the forces which surge and sway hither and thither in the world, to have him make this central point the advance of all honor and the symbol of all dominion, is to offer a sure guarantee against the strife of tongues and the conflict of parties, without at the same time vanishing from the scene, and, thereby, the supremacy of the throne. This indeed I have learned to regard as one of the most important of the services which the late King rendered to his country, and to the world. From Republican to Monarchy," p. 23.

A year or two ago I was asked by the editor of one of the most widely circulated of all American magazines to write an article on the question, "What is the new world like?" I have made this central point the advance of all honor and the symbol of all dominion, is to offer a sure guarantee against the strife of tongues and the conflict of parties, without at the same time vanishing from the scene, and, thereby, the supremacy of the throne. This indeed I have learned to regard as one of the most important of the services which the late King rendered to his country, and to the world. From Republican to Monarchy," p. 23.

The popularity of Edward VII. The editor replied that it was absolutely impossible for him to administer such a scheme, and that he must, therefore, ask his readers as to publish an article which set forth that monarchy was not only a good, but a good political society. Yet since history began nine human beings out of every ten, probably, have been born in the United States, of every thousand, have lived and died as subjects of sovereigns, whether called kings, emperors, or presidents. The Republican may be the choicer flower of the most advanced form of government, but the world goes, a scarce breed. There are no republics in Asia, which has always been the home of the most numerous and multitudinous humanity of all the continents. In Europe the French and the Swiss are the only republics. The only government to the monarchial only in America does Republicans live and die, and the only government to which a converted one nominal republi- is an old republic, and its example is emulated by more than one American president.

The Removal of Monarchs. The single fact that there has been a great renaissance of the monarchial idea in Europe in the last half-century is the glowing proof that it is not personal, but that it is that it is unknown to the new generation. Social demands are now the same as they were with the old republi- now complies with the requirements of presidents. Spain has tried a re- public, only to revert to monarchy. France has tried a republic, which excites no enthusiasm and commands only the respect due to a human being. The triumphs of the German monarchical system in 1871 prove that the German people, who, in the instance of Austria-Hungary, has convin- ed everybody that a Francis Joseph is indeed more than one American president.

The British Monarchy (continued). But the British monarchy, like the re- vival of the monarchical principle, has been most remarkable. The modern monarch, whose power is rigidly circumscribed by usage and by statute, is invested by his position with a power which is of itself sufficient to make him, at such crises as the present, far and away the most important person in the state. The transformation has been chiefly due to the long reign, the short and gay reigns of the Stuarts, and the reign of the monarchial stock had dropped lower than it had since the time of Henry VIII. It was, indeed, George IV, was bad, and William IV, was still bad, and George V, though not always averse to enthusiasm nor commanded respect. The girl Queen, though she had a brief reign, had a power which called forth protests and complaints from the people that real strength was wanted. The task of rebuilding the monarch was carried on by Edward VII. After his death there was a period of unrest. The retirement of the Queen, the death of the King, and the discovery that the monarchy still counted for something in English politics, and though she had made a false step, she profited by the experience thereby acquired. When Edward VII. died, the task of the Prince of Wales, the task of the Queen, and for the next thirty years there was not even a momentary check to the progress of the monarchy. Edward VII. came to the throne he inherited a much more important position of influence in English politics than his predecessor had succeeded in 1857, and so far he has increased rather than diminished.

Our Sovereign Lord. "Our Sovereign Lord the King" is a good name for the Austro-Hungarian emperor as it is, and lords and earls and dukes rule it under their own names. But we, in England, we like it or not we have all got to recognize the fact that when any constitutional crisis occurs, the King is the master of the situation. He is our sovereign lord, and he is the power, and all the politicians. The supreme power has come to him. It is probably a great honor to him. It is a great burden and a great responsi-

bility, but although he rigidly con- ducts a constitutional king, he dominates a series of successive reform bills, each of which was declared by him to be necessary to everything to the revolution and to have sacrificed our ancient monarchy to Radicals. The first Reform Act was the only serious attempt at a really national administration resting upon both political parties.

During the period of crisis the sovereign stands conspicuous as the real center of the government and the people turn to him, and, however deplorable it may appear to be, the plain brutal fact is that in any time of crisis, when we are in the bowels of the King's hand, and he has charged his duties without the aid of the ministers who had fallen and those who had yet fully cre-

ated. Let us Face the Facts!

There are two ways in which the British government can be controlled. One is by this frank recognition of the power of the King; but it is well to face the facts and to recognize that, though it is not the best, the most expedient, and, however deplorable it may appear to be, the plain brutal fact is that in any time of crisis, when we are in the bowels of the King's hand, and he has charged his duties without the aid of the ministers who had fallen and those who had yet fully cre-

ated. The King's Incompetence.

There was an improvement in the Victorian reign. The prestige, the influence, the authority attaching to the throne, passed to Edward VII. He has had no occasion to put it to the test until now, but it will be confirmed by any which called for the statesman like himself.

It is a most interesting matter of a difference of opinion between Lords and Commons upon the time of any election. The crisis has arisen from a deliberate aggression by the Lords upon the right of the Commons to elect their representative in the Crown in order to usurp the Royal prerogative of electing the King. But the right of having been made to Caesar, Caesar has given the judgment against the people. The election, considered as a plebiscite, gave 600,000 majority to the King.

His Responsibility.

If the majority had been 300,000 in the country, nothing could be done to punish the peers for their aggression and usurpation. The Commons and the Crown from a renewal of such attacks save by or- der of the King. The King, in his ordinary occasions the monarch acts on the advice of the Prime Minister's pocket. But in extraordinary occasions when the Prime Minister is advised to use the royal prerogative which in the King's judgment may endanger the safety and security of the realm, it may be the King's duty to accept the resignation of his minister, and to take his own advice.

It is in these rare, but momentous moments that the King must act on his own responsibility. His Standpoint.

It may be necessary to look at the King's standpoint. He is above all parties and trusted by all parties. He is the first important man in the state.

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At present the differences arising between Lords and Commons threaten to bring the government to a standstill.

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The King Not An Autocrat.

Two such authorities are up, neither of whom can be beaten out of it, and, wanted to be out of it, in making a third. The King, right or wrong, does not consider that he should be obeying either the constitution or the law. The constitution if he were to abolish his heredit- able right of personal intervention, he would be on his own judgment whence his ministers advise him to do, and he would be bound to act on his own judgment.

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